

Pre-Town Meeting

February 27, 2023

Present: Doon Hinderyckx, Frank Severy, Pat Harvey(zoom)

Guests: Orca Media, Kristen LaPell, Terry Severy, Rob Gardner, Shirley Gage, Nancy Woolley, Norm Christiansen, Tony Goupee, Larry & Lesley Straus, Dean Mendell

Present on Zoom: Orca Media, Troy LaPell, Martha Slater, Jan McCann, Paula, Jeff Gephart, Nancy Vadnais, Burma Cassidy

Doon called the Pre-Town meeting at 6:15 pm

Doon confirmed the open meeting law conformity

Correction to page 69 of the Rochester High School Repurposing Committee in the Town

Report: Doon said this is regarding the third paragraph a correction to the amount of \$16 should be \$160 for every \$100,00 in value.

Doon opened the meeting to the public asking if anyone had any questions. Rob Gardner had something to say about the essay submitted. He is very concerned that the cost and risks are not put in the foreground in common sense easy to understand issues. Rob shared this project is first and foremost a matter of money, cost, and risk. He continually felt the commonsense nuts and bolts information about cost and risks were never in the foreground. He said in the four-page report there is only one sentence stating how we are going to pay for this, and it is with a grant. He is very concerned about the lack of information and open meetings to ask the questions. He said he has nothing against Vic or Kathryn, they are good friends of his but that this information is important. He feels there should be 2 open meetings to get the cost and risks associated with purchasing the building brought forward in easy-to-understand fashion. Doon said this is exactly why the vote could not happen at Town Meeting because we are not ready. He said there is no date yet set for the purchase. Pat shared if the optimism of the committee diminishes then the committee will no longer seek out if the building can be converted into anything. She explained they are not even to the point of sharing the costs yet because they are only in the phase of whether it would conform to the rules, laws and grant requirements. She said they can't get to the phase of renovation until they know first if the building has a future. They cannot send in the carpenters or lead abatement people only to find out that ACT 250 is going to say no. She said we are going to get there; it is a slow ride when you go for grants. It can be a long process. She said once they get through all the current hurdles, they can move on to the building issues and Rob's list will come up and she said honestly the costs will increase again. Rob said he is not lobbying against the school. He just thinks the information needs to be upfront.

Doon asked if anyone had anything more to share or ask about town meeting.

He moved to close Pre-Town Meeting at 6:27 pm. Pat seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Doon moved to open the regular Selectboard meeting at 6:27 pm

Doon confirmed the open meeting law conformity.

Prior Meeting Minutes: Doon moved to approve the Emergency SB Minutes for February 10th tabling the opening of West Hill Bridge Bids because the bid was postponed a week and Approval for Huntington House Liquor License. Frank seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Pat moved to approve the February 13 Selectboard minutes and the February 17th Special SB minutes. Frank seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Update on Skatespace: Dean spoke to the board about the continuation of Skatespace donations. They have currently received about \$15,000 in donations. Dean asked the board about what ARPA funds the town could set aside for Skatespace to help with money towards the grant. Doon asked what the target number is. Dean said the total target number is \$50,000. Norm applied for the Levesque Award through Gifford. They will be awarding 2 grants in the amount of \$2,000 each to the local community. Norm shared the State of Vermont has 2 grants for Recreation that they would like to apply for. They require matching funds. There is some caution for how the ARPA funds would be used as matching funds in a State Grant. Nancy asked how much the two state grants are for. Dean said the one he has is the State of Vermont Recreational Facilities Grant Program. He said if the resources created up to \$25,000, they would match but did not guarantee the total of \$25,000. Frank said there were projects earmarked for the ARPA funds prior to money to set aside for Skatespace. The retaining wall at the Town Office would need to go out this year as a bid and the other money promised was towards the library. He said they penciled in somewhere between \$20,000-\$25,000 to go towards Skatespace. He said the concern is towards the rules of the grant and how ARPA can be used as well. The grant application is due in early fall. There was concern of the deed issues with a slice of Skatespace built on Martha Slater's property. Doon suggested doing a property line adjustment through the planning and zoning and would need to look into that. Pat said even if they used the donation money towards the grant, then the ARPA funds can be used once the clarification is made, they can do so. Dean is ready to put the work out to bid. He asked if he could use the website as a means to advertise. Larry said the bid should go out through the municipality. Frank suggested meeting when ready.

West Hill Bridge Bid Discussion: The bids came in double, or more than the project was projected to cost. Frank said they would need to decide within 30 days. He said there are options. He said we could throw them all out, award to the lowest bidder. Frank said it would be best to hold off before deciding. He felt we should look at some funding. He felt there would be a risk of throwing up the bids. He said we need to look serious at the low bidder and find some funding. Doon asked what we would be short. Frank said we are about \$400,000 short. The board will table the decision for further research and additional funding source to discuss at the next regular or emergency selectboard meeting.

PW150 Cat Z Document Signature for reimbursement: Kristen shared with the board the CAT Z, which is Joan's admin costs for FEMA required a signature to be put in the pool for payment in the amount of \$16,530. The State's portion also required a signature of the total FEMA project in the amount of \$31,168.94. Once received this will cover the final and full payment for the April 2019 storm through FEMA.

Library Update: Tony shared last Thursdays Herald had a lot of upcoming events at the library. He shared one of the events is the Great Decisions discussion will start April 18th and run for 8 Tuesdays.

Highway Update: Frank shared they will be meeting with Chris Bump and John to go over upcoming projects.

Utilities Operator Update: Doon said the Spring Walkaround Contract with Dubois and King was signed for a 3-year contract. Fire Department did get their new truck. They are getting it equipped. He said it will be a couple weeks before it gets back together.

Energy Operator Update: Jeff said he has been working with Two Rivers to see if they can get that project into the Municipal Energy Resilience Program. He shared that with Two Rivers with detailed information on the town buildings. He said it appears the library is critical with not the energy standpoint but the preservation part. The project is going to be expensive. He shared the extensive work.

A walk through at the high school indicated large holes with infrared thermography. There were enough very large holes filled that it should help with the energy costs moving forward.

He shared the town really needs a grant writer after listening to the Skatespace discussion. Pat asked if he is utilizing Two Rivers in the grant writing.

Grant Update: Kristen shared that we have received the reimbursement for the security cameras at the fire department, so that is closed out.

Public Comment: Shirley Gage said she heard we will not be connected with Granville First Response. Doon said we are not losing Granville First Response. Pat explained there was a decrease in funding by 50 % of their request. She said there were deficiencies and they have improved upon them. She said we are taking a step back and looking at the service WRVA provides. She said we are stepping back to see if it would be wise to pool the communities throughout the whole valley to see if it could improve the services with the EMT's we have. She said we are not eliminating the GFR.

Meeting adjourned at 7:11pm

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Smith